

SUCCESS

REGIONS 1 & 4, STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY

NOVEMBER 2011



"While we may fight about water, everybody in Nevada agrees about weeds. We're against them."

Tina Mudd,
Nevada Department of
Agriculture

Clark County Riparian:
\$770,000 in funding

**Washoe County Fire
Rehabilitation:**
\$4,338,000 in funding

**Carson River Fuels
Treatment and Stream Bank
Stabilization:**
\$627,000 in funding

Nevada Responds to Fire Threat

Recovery Act Funds Tackle Noxious Weeds and Hazardous Fuels

The State of Nevada's phenomenal response to invasive plants and fuels reduction using Recovery Act funds was not an overnight development. Rather, it was a success 10 years in the making.



Carson River seeded area after weed removal

Tina Mudd—program administrator for the Nevada Department of Agriculture—notes it was funds provided by State and Private Forestry over the past 10 years that allowed Nevada to develop a noxious weed program.

Funding and support from Janet Valle, the Forest Service's noxious weed grant coordinator in Ogden, Utah, were the catalysts for developing a network of cooperators, including volunteers in cooperative weed management areas

(known as "CWMAs"), who were ready to get to work on a large scale when the Recovery Act came on the scene.

The \$5.7 million of Recovery Act funds allocated to invasive plant projects in the State of Nevada enabled relatively small scale, localized treatments to be combined into a larger, coordinated effort to make a significant improvement in the weed situation across the State. It was a more holistic, "landscape-level" approach than the State and counties were able to do in the past.

Clark County Riparian Project

Roughly \$770,000 of the Recovery Act funds went to the *Clark County Riparian Project* and focused on invasive plants that create high levels of fuels within the riparian areas. Salt cedar—also known as tamarisk—was one of the primary species targeted throughout the Clark County projects.

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Clark County tamarisk removal

The Clark County projects involved the lower Las Vegas wash; tributaries to the Las Vegas wash within the Las Vegas valley; the Muddy River, in the upper and lower Moapa valleys; and the Colorado River.

Along the Las Vegas wash, the project focused on cutting firebreaks and removing invasive plants that are rampant through the wash, which runs through many Las Vegas neighborhoods. A fire in the wash could quickly travel through the highly-populated neighborhoods it borders.

Washoe County Fire Rehabilitation

Restoring seven different areas burned between 1996 through 2008 in Washoe County was a priority for the State of Nevada for a number of reasons.

The noxious weed medusa head was inadvertently introduced into burned

areas by equipment brought in to fight the fires, resulting in the first known occurrences of the weed in the state. Recovery Act funds enabled the medusa head infestations to be treated and isolated before they had the opportunity to spread.

In addition, the fire restoration project sites are located on the eastern slope of the Sierra Mountains, part of the holding basin for Lake Tahoe. The bare areas created by the fire increased water runoff and threatened to wash out erosion control structures and ephemeral creeks, potentially creating sediment pollution problems throughout the Tahoe Basin and Truckee River watershed.

Carson River Fuels Treatments and Stream Bank Restoration

Cooperative weed management area crews from Douglas, Carson, Lyon, and Churchill counties worked throughout the watershed to reduce fuels and stabilize stream banks by mapping and treating invasive plants like perennial pepperweed.

Prescribed burns and other treatments were used to reduce the noxious weed infestations and provide access along stream banks for stabilization work.

The weed crews cut willows to allow access to treat weeds along irrigation canals, then—in an effort to “waste not, want not”—used the willow cuttings for stream bank stabilization elsewhere in the project area.